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July 21, 2016

Warrior Games Help WTB Athletes With Recovery

By **ANDREW DAMSTEDT**
NSAB Public Affairs staff writer

After three years of doctors' appointments and multiple surgeries after being injured in Bagram, Afghanistan, Army Spc. Stephanie Morris underwent surgery for a below-knee right leg amputation at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

Before that happened though, Morris wanted to alleviate her mother's concerns for her well-being so she decided to train for and compete in the 2016 Warrior Games. Morris, who was injured in 2013 after taking indirect fire from two rocket-propelled grenades, has known that her leg would be amputated, but, she said her mother wanted the doctors to try everything first.

"It wasn't an easy decision for me," Morris said. "I think the part that I struggled with most was my mom dealing with it because she's so much more emotional than me, so when she sees all the amputees and all the different stuff they can do and how they bounce back – I'm not going to say it made it easier, but it put her a little more at ease knowing that I'm going to be okay."

Morris was one of three Warrior Transition Brigade (WTB) Soldiers who competed at the 2016 Warrior Games at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York in June. WTB Soldiers, Army Spc. David Snipes and Army Spc. Shealynn Casserly, also competed in several events.

Bryce Doody, WTB Army adaptive sports coordinator, said the three athletes did a great job at the Warrior Games and took home several medals between them.

Morris, 27, earned gold medals in wheelchair basketball, seated shot put and discus and a bronze medal in the seated volleyball.

Morris wasn't always interested in participating in adaptive sports. She recalls when she first arrived at the medical center she would be invited to play but declined several opportunities.

"I was in denial when I first got injured," Morris said. "I didn't talk to a lot of people. I stayed by myself and stayed in my room. For the first year they tried to get me to do sports and I did not. I had a lot of anger built up and I was really depressed."

Eventually, she warmed up to the idea to try wheelchair basketball, which sport she said has helped her find her new normal.



PHOTO COURTESY BRYCE DOODY

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Army Spc. David Snipes throws a discus during the 2016 Warrior Games at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y.

Commander's Column: Summer Update

NSA Bethesda Community,

Simply amazing! We've already hit the middle of summer! Can you believe it?

As summer marches on, I feel it's the ideal time to recap our "101 Critical Days of Summer" campaign, reminding you of measures you can employ to keep you and your families safe as you continue your summer activities. Please heed these valuable tips:

Remember, it takes time to acclimate to the steadily increasing temperatures we've been experiencing lately. Don't overdo it with activities in the heat. Adjust gradually. Drink water throughout the day and always stay hydrated. Alcohol does not hydrate the body the same as water...it actually dehydrates you.

If you or your kids are outside playing, don't go for hours on end without breaks that include water. Remember to use sunscreen to prevent painful sunburn injuries and reapply it during the day as necessary.

When you get behind the wheel for a cross-country trip or just to go down the street, drive responsibly. Don't drink and drive. Don't drive while texting or using your hand-held phone device. These are common-sense practices that may help save your lives. That phone call or text can wait. If not, then safely pull off the road and tend to your business.

Summer is a time for fun on and in the water. When swimming, always swim with a partner. Keep an eye on your kids when they're in the water and stay out of the water if you are tired or under the influence of drugs, alcohol or medication. Always know the depth of the water before diving. If caught in a current, swim with it at an angle towards the beach until you are out of the current or reach the shore.

If you have pets, remember that hot pavement or surfaces can injure them. Make sure they have plenty of water, too.

National Parents' Day is July 24. Why not give your parents a call or a visit to thank them for everything they've done for you. They'll appreciate it.

Here are two great, local opportunities coming up that you should know about:

On July 28, the U.S. Navy Band rock ensemble, 'The Cruisers,' will perform at Bethesda's Veterans Park (on the corner of Norfolk & Woodmont Avenue) from 6 – 8 p.m. The Cruisers play for audiences worldwide. This promises to be a great show.



Capt. Marvin L. Jones
NSAB Commanding Officer

On Tuesday, Aug. 2, NSAB will host its second annual National Night Out event on the USO's front lawn, featuring a variety of foods, games and display booths. This event helps promote involvement in community crime prevention activities, fosters police-community partnerships, increases neighborhood camaraderie and sends a message to criminals that our neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

I hope that each of you pause this summer and take time to enjoy being with your family and friends. While you are enjoying yourself, please be safe. Your family at home needs you and your 'work family' here at NSAB needs you, too. We look for you to come back from your summer fun refreshed and ready to continue contributing to our noble mission. It can't be accomplished without you. Stay safe and enjoy the rest of the summer!

Bethesda Notebook

Inaugural Director's Cup

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center is set to hold its inaugural Director's Cup competition on July 22 beginning at 9 a.m. Everyone on the installation is invited to attend. Events will include three-on-three basketball, seven vs. seven flag football, six vs. six soccer, four-man relay, wheelbarrow race, sack race, three-legged race, dead hang (pull-up bar), sit-up and push-up challenges, tug of war and dunk tank. Hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages will be provided to all who attend. For more information, contact HMC Jameson at Calisha.m.jameson.mil@mail.mil, or HM2 Redor at Rodney.t.redor.mil@mail.mil.

Fleet, Family Support Center

The Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) on Naval Support Activity Bethesda offers programs intended to assist service members and their families with military life. FFSC's workshops and seminars include: job search strategies for military spouses; federal resume writing; time management; credit management; consumer financial awareness; interview skills; pre-deployment briefings; return and reunion briefings; and more. For more information, call 301-319-4087, or visit FFSC in Bldg. 11, first floor.

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Taking A Glance At The Military Blended Retirement System

By **BRIAN PAMPURO, AFC PERSONAL FINANCIAL MANAGER FLEET AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER BETHESDA**

As the Department of Defense (DoD) transitions to a new pay system for retirees, as many as 1.8 million active duty and reserve component members will be given an option to switch to the new "Military Blended Retirement System" (MBRS) that Congress enacted under the FY-2016 National Defense Authorization Act. The new system is scheduled to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2018. Personnel who join the military on or after Jan. 1, 2018 will be automatically enrolled in the MBRS. Personnel who joined the military after Jan. 1, 2006 but before Jan. 1, 2018 will be provided the option to switch to the new plan and personnel who joined the military prior to Jan. 1,



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Capt. Gregory Smith is piped ashore during his retirement ceremony aboard Naval Air Station Jacksonville.

PHOTO BY MC2 DANIEL MESHEL

From the Deckplates: What Song Best Describes Your Work Ethic?

PHOTOS BY AIRMAN MATTHEW HOBSON



LS2 Frank Rohrer
"Thunderstruck"
by AC/DC

It's a motivating song. Makes you want to get out there and carry out the plan of the day.



Carl Cohen USO Volunteer
"Mellow Sunday"
by The Jaguars

Just mellow, just let it flow and just go on a smooth path, flowing, that's all there is to it.



HM3 Katherine Combs
"Work"

by Rihanna ft. Drake
Because I work, work, work, work, work.



HM2 Jatiela Moore
"Say Ahh"

by Christina Milian ft. Young Jeezy

With this song, when a lot of people think you are from the ghetto — that you are never going to amount to anything — so with this song it's like 'Hey even though I was in that situation I'm proving myself that I can be better that I can do better' and every day you have to prove yourself, and I really like the song. It's basically saying, 'Don't let anybody tell you what to do in your life; make your own decisions.'



HM3 Donny Carswell
"Gonna Fly Home Now"
(Theme from Rocky)
by Bill Conti

Because every day is a different challenge. No matter if it's physical or if it's mental. You have to be prepared to fight all day every day. So I feel like it's a challenge like its training. So when I hear that that's how I feel every single day. It doesn't matter what you do, you can be like me, an 844 corpsman or you could be working in the pharmacy, you just got to train and fight everything. If I could walk around with that song on, I would.



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

From left, Army Col. Michael Heimall, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center director, U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Capt. Moira G. McGuire, USPHS Deputy Surgeon General Rear Adm. Sylvia Trent-Adams, USPHS Lt. Jessica Haines and Navy Master Chief Alma Robinson cut a cake celebrating the 218th birthday of the U.S. Public Health Service July 14.

Protect, Promote, Advance: Public Health Service Celebrates 218th Birthday

By **BERNARD S. LITTLE**
WRNMMC Public Affairs staff
writer

Observing the 218th birthday of the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), members of the Commissioned Corps of PHS ensemble, clad in their dress whites, sang the PHS March to cap off a celebration following morning colors at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center on July 14.

The lyrics of PHS March speak to the PHS purpose: “The mission of our service is known the world around... In research and in treatment, no equal can be found. In the silent war against disease, no truce is ever seen... We serve on the land and the sea for humanity. The Public Health Service team!”

Rear Adm. Sylvia Trent-Adams, deputy surgeon general and chief

nurse officer of the PHS, served as the celebration’s guest speaker, and also discussed the contributions of the PHS during its 218-year history of ensuring nation’s health and wellness.

“Since the passage of the Act for the Relief of Sick and Disabled Seamen [in 1798], many things have changed in health care, and many things have changed within the PHS,” Trent-Adams said. “From our very humble beginnings with the marine hospitals to the modern day USPHS, we see today the fulfillment of a destiny [and] fulfillment of our mission. At this current point in time, we are continuing to protect, promote and advance the health and safety of our nation.”

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PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

Members of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) perform during a celebration for the USPHS’ 218th birthday at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center July 14.

ATHLETES

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"It really helped me because I'm around other people who are going through the same thing," she said. "When you do adaptive sports it takes you away from the reality of things – whether it is for the moment or a couple of hours or whatever the case may be. It allows you to get that sense of relief from everything that is going on around you when you're playing or competing."

For those wounded, ill and injured service members thinking about adaptive sports, Miller encourages them to go for it.

"It can be something that they really like," she said. "You don't know what you're good at until you try. Yes, it's something new, but everything you try is something new."

She plans to continue playing adaptive sports even after she is released from active-duty status.

This was the first Warrior Games for Snipes, 27, who earned five bronze medals, two silver and one gold during the competition.

His gold medal was in cycling, which was the sport he focused most on during his training, he said. He trained with the Ride 2 Recovery program, which also allowed him use of a recumbent bicycle for the

competition. One of the training rides he went on was a 480 mile bike ride across Texas.

The competitiveness of adaptive sports, and in particular training for the Warrior Games is something that helped drive Snipes to become active after he was hit by a car riding his motorcycle in 2014. The accident left him without much use of his left arm.

"Initially, I had a surgery within a month of coming to (WRNMMC) and I was bedridden for a little while," Snipes said. "Honestly, I just got lazy and blew up – I gained 40 to 50 pounds – and I started missing being active."

The first adaptive sport he tried out was archery, which he said made him excited because he was able to shoot again. After that he tried cycling and then he started participating in more and more sports, saying that he wanted to try every event he could at the Warrior Games regional trials. In addition to cycling, he competed in track, shotput and discus.

Getting back in shape became a form of therapy for Snipes.

"It was all around good for me and my health," Snipes said. "As crazy as exhausting yourself for therapy sounds, it's therapeutic."

Competing in the games was a great experience because he got to see how all his training paid off, but



PHOTO COURTESY BRYCE DOODY

Army Spc. Shealynn Casserly competes in the seated discus during the Warrior Games competition day at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y.

more importantly, he was able to meet people in a similar situation as him. He said he met veterans with similar injuries and they were able to share what has helped them and also things to expect from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Snipes has his eyes set on next

year's Warrior Games in Chicago, but right now he's more focused on completing the medical evaluation board process, helping his fiancée plan their November wedding and getting enrolled in school.

"I plan on going to trials next year," he said.

This Week In History

July 21, 2015

Los Angeles County, U.S., votes to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour from \$9/hour; the new pay rate will be valid for county workers and employees working in unincorporated areas of the county

July 22, 1893

Katharine Lee Bates writes "America the Beautiful"

July 23, 2013

Hercules 264, a Gulf of Mexico natural gas drilling rig, partially collapses off the coast of Louisiana; the rig remains standing but sustained extensive damage to the derrick package as a result of a continuing fire

July 24, 1969

Apollo 11 returns to Earth

July 25, 1947

U.S. Air Force, Navy and War Department form U.S. Department of Defense

July 26, 1990

President George H.W. Bush signs Americans With Disabilities Act

July 27, 1909

Orville Wright tests 1st U.S. Army airplane

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RETIREMENT

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2006 will be “grandfathered” in their current retiree pay plan.

The new system is called “blended” because it combines the current annuity (Defined Benefit Plan) that retirees with 20 years of service or more earn with the Thrift Savings Plan (Defined Contribution Plan). Additionally, a third key feature labeled “Continuation Pay” also will be added for personnel who are willing to obligate at least four additional years of service at the 12 year mark in their career. The new MBRS model closely resembles the Federal Employee Retirement System.

Some of the highlights and goals of the new MBRS include:

- Automatically creating TSP accounts for all service members and beginning government contributions equal to 1 percent of basic pay after

60 days on active duty.

- Automatically setting service member’s voluntary personal contributions to the TSP at 3 percent of basic pay.
- Allowing service members to opt out of that 3 percent voluntary contribution of basic pay only after completing financial literacy training at their first duty station.
- Allowing the TSP to “vest” and be legally transferred to individual service members after two years.
- Beginning a government dollar-for-dollar match of individual service member’s out-of-pocket TSP contributions, up to 4 percent of base pay at the start of the third year of service through 26 years of service. Coupled with the previously mentioned 1 percent automatic contribution, the total government contribution to the service member’s TSP account would equal 5 percent.

- Allowing the individual military services to offer “continuation pay” to boost retention.

- Shrinking the size of the current pension by 20 percent. Retirees currently earn 2.5 percent of the “High 36” average of base pay X the number of years served. Under the MBRS, that rate will drop to 2 percent of the “High 36” average of base pay X number of years served. With this reduction, DoD estimates an overall savings of \$1.9 billion by the year 2021.

Should You Choose the Military’s Blended Retirement System? Perhaps that’s not even a fair question until you’ve had a chance to learn as much as you can about it.

The goal of the DoD is to make sure that personnel who are eligible to switch to the new MBRS will be armed significantly enough to make a well informed decision. Training and education programs will become widely

available as the military prepares for this major transition.

Whether transitioning to the MBRS or not, it is certainly prudent for ALL military (and civilian) personnel to learn as much as they can about the Thrift Savings Plan and to utilize the funds within TSP to enhance their retirement savings.

As we move closer to the MBRS, service members will see dozens of articles and some planning calculators offered between now and Jan. 1, 2018. However, an article that I recently read offered these quick and simple thoughts regarding the MBRS for most of today’s service members:

1. If you think you’re staying on active duty for at least 20 years, then stick with the current High Three retirement.

2. If you’re pretty sure that you’re leaving active duty before 20 years then take the new Blended Retirement System if you are eligible.

Training on the new MBRS

is currently being offered in Joint Knowledge On-Line (JKO). The course title is J3OP-US1330 Leader Training to Introduce the Blended Retirement System (BRS) For the Uniformed Services. Although this course is designed to give Leaders insight to the new MBRS, I recommend that everyone complete the training and become more familiar with the elements and verbiage of the MBRS.

In a nutshell, while we are waiting for more training and information, think about how these changes to the retirement system can affect you and your family as you prepare and consider your long-range retirement planning goals. The Fleet and Family Support Center Personal Financial Management team is standing by and is willing to provide any assistance needed. Call 301-319-4087 if you would like to meet with a financial counselor to discuss any of your financial concerns.

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Maryland Fleet Week and Air Show Baltimore October 10-17, 2016

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PHS

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Trent-Adams added the PHS includes more than 6,700 officers serving in 26 different federal agencies at more than 900 locations domestically and internationally. “We continue to have an impact on health and safety for the entire world. We are currently serving in the Zika response; we served in the Ebola response; and we continue to take on every mission the president and our administration can bring to us. We proudly serve shoulder-to-shoulder with you as we serve in uniform,” she added.

Following her remarks, Trent-Adams cut the PHS birthday cake with Army Col. Michael Heimall, WRNMMC’s director, Lt. Jessica Haines, representing the most junior PHS officer at WRNMMC, Capt. Moira G. McGuire, representing the most senior PHS officer at WRNMMC, and Navy Master Chief Alma Robinson.

The U.S. Public Health Service traces its roots back to July 16, 1798, when Pres. John Adams signed into law the “Act for the Relief of Sick and Disabled Seamen,” which led to the creation of a network of marine hospitals along the nation’s coastal and inland waterways, including the first marine hospital owned by the federal government at Washington Point in Virginia.



PHOTO BY BERNARD S. LITTLE

U.S. Public Health Service Deputy Surgeon General Rear Adm. Sylvia Trent-Adams speaks during the 218th birthday celebration of the U.S. Public Health Service at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center July 14.

In 1870, administration of the marine hospitals was centralized under the Marine Hospital Service (MHS), headquartered in Washington, D.C., and led by the supervising surgeon (later called surgeon general). The following year, John Maynard Woodworth, the first supervising surgeon, adopted a military model for his medical staff, instituting examinations for applicants and implementing required uniforms for physicians.

An act of Congress established the Commissioned Corps of the MHS

in 1889, and organized its officers along military lines with titles and pay corresponding to Army and Navy grades.

In 1902, the Marine Hospital Service expanded to the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service to reflect its growing responsibilities, including controlling epidemic disease through quarantine and disinfection measures, as well as immunization programs, and examination of arriving immigrants into the country such as those landing at Ellis Island in New York. In 1912, the name of the Public Health and Marine

Hospital Service was shortened to the Public Health Service.

Today, the Assistant Secretary of Health and the U.S. Surgeon General lead the USPHS Commissioned Corps in fulfilling its mission of protecting, promoting and advancing the health and safety of the nation. The health professionals of the USPHS include physicians, nurses, scientists, dietitians, physical therapists, behavioral health, health service and other officers.

In addition to efforts of the PHS in the battles against Zika and Ebola, the PHS has been instrumental in efforts to lower tobacco use nationally, prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS, and ensuring service members and their families receive needed behavioral health services. PHS officer have also deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as in response to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Wilma and Sandy.

Vice Admiral (Dr.) Vivek H. Murthy has served as the U.S. Surgeon General since December 2014. He has explained his goal is to modernize communication from his office to reach a broad spectrum of diverse people to create a healthier country. He added, “It’s about creating a culture of prevention in America, focused on good nutrition, physical activity and emotional well-being.”

For more information about the PHS, visit the site <http://www.usphs.gov>.



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